

dom we enjoy. Because you are standing watch, our Nation has the greatest freedom in history. Because you are there, we can grow stronger and everyone has the chance to make the most of his or her God-given abilities. Because you are standing watch, we can raise our children in freedom and give them their chance, too. Because you are standing watch, those children can sleep without fear and wake up to the kinds of holidays we are about to celebrate.

Day-in and day-out, your sacrifice makes all this possible. It is your gift to your country. For all your fellow Americans, in a very real sense you make every day Christmas. You have always been faithful to America, and America must always be faithful to you.

Thank you. *Semper Fi*. Happy holidays. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:48 p.m. at Goettge Memorial Fieldhouse. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Charles E. Wilhelm, USMC, Commander, Maj. Gen. Ray L. Smith, USMC, Deputy Commander, and Sgt. Maj. Albert S. Wilson, USMC, Marine Forces Atlantic; Maj. Gen. Patrick G. Howard, USMC, Commanding General, Camp Lejeune; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; Mayor Marvin Choate of Jacksonville, NC; Lt. Bern Nowack, USN, Chaplain, Battalion Landing Team, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines; Chief Warrant Officer Tommy L. Anderson, USMC, Director, 2d Marine Division Band; and Col. Richard Natonski, USMC, Commanding Officer, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Statement on the Retirement of General George A. Joulwan, USA *December 23, 1996*

Today Gen. George Joulwan, the Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command, and the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, announced that he plans to retire next spring, after 36 years of active duty service. I want to take this opportunity to commend this extraordinary soldier for his exemplary service to his Nation, particularly his role in building a new post-cold-war security structure in Europe.

His sound military advice on the use of military power to back U.S. diplomacy, his crucial role in shaping new security structures and partnerships, and his superlative leadership in implementing peace in Bosnia will ensure that the NATO alliance will remain the anchor of American engagement in Europe and the linchpin of transatlantic security. In Bosnia, a breakthrough was achieved when he married appropriate military power to diplomatic leadership. He seized this opportunity for peace which he had created, helped to broker a cease-fire, and then, through his command of the multinational force IFOR, he ensured a stable and secure

environment so that the parties had the confidence to carry out their obligations under the Dayton agreement.

As General Joulwan worked to bring peace to Bosnia, he also led the effort to transform NATO so that it could better address such conflicts and remain the guarantor of Europe's democracy and the central force for European stability. He was the architect of the adaptation of NATO to meet the new challenges of a changed world, enhancing its security through the Partnership For Peace program and by modernizing its command structure. His efforts have built a foundation for a Europe that is safe, secure, and democratic well into the 21st century.

General Joulwan's leadership and wise counsel will truly be missed in the senior decisionmaking ranks of our national security structure. Hillary and I join our NATO allies in wishing him the very best.